

# Homosexuality Is Not a Threat

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By SYDNEY J. HARRIS

**T**HE homosexual in our society — whether you approve of him or not — is enmeshed in a Catch-22 that makes the Army version look positively benign.

Consider the case of John Green, a 50-year-old electrician, who is suing the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) for \$1 million. Green was fired from his job, and his five Government security clearances were lifted, when he admitted to being gay.

Now, it is not a crime to be a homosexual in our society, but it might as well be. Green was bounced because the CIA (as well as other security forces) believes that

gays are more susceptible to being blackmailed than straights are.

The official fear is that the threat of "exposure" might pressure the closet gays to trade classified material in exchange for silence about their tendency. But why are gays more likely to be the targets of blackmailers? Because if they are disclosed as such, they will be fired from sensitive jobs. Catch-22.

If nobody much cared who was gay and who was not, the potential blackmailers would lose all their leverage. If our national attitude was "So what?" then the gays would be no more of a "security risk" than any straight male who might succumb to the blandish-

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ments of a seductive female agent.

But since we do seem to care, and since thousands of gays are afraid to proclaim their true identity, our very attitude of intolerance generates the "risk" in hiring them for military-industrial positions of trust. In effect, we force them to hide, and then penalize them for hiding.

All we have to do is to change our archaic attitude, to bring it in line with most other civilized countries, and then quite automatically the homosexual is no longer any more fearful of being "exposed" than anyone else. And, just as automatically, once this fear of stigma is removed, the risk of blackmail evaporates like a puff of smoke.

(Actually, and historically, heterosexual men have proved to be far-greater security risks in the spy system, bartering secrets for feminine favors, for greed, for revenge, or for political fanaticism.)

Mr. Green seems to have a good case against the CIA, especially since he didn't even bother to lie to the agency about his sexual proclivity when he was asked to provide a reference for a friend.

If a man is straight enough to admit he isn't straight, who in the world would try to blackmail him? This is the only way out of the Catch.

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